

## Abbas Fatehi El-Helaly, 1902–1983

M. K. Abo-El-Dahab



Abbas Fatehi El-Helaly was born on December 15, 1902, in Assuit, Egypt. He received a B.Sc. degree in 1931, the Diploma of Membership of the Imperial College in 1934, and a Ph.D. in plant pathology from Imperial College, University of London, in 1934. He began work as a plant pathologist in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1934 and became assistant professor

of botany and plant pathology in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Alexandria, in 1942. From 1942–1962 he advanced through the academic ranks to professor, chairman of the Plant Pathology Department, and vice-dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Alexandria, Egypt. He retired in 1962 with the title of professor emeritus and died on March 6th, 1983.

Dr. El-Helaly founded the Egyptian Phytopathological Society in 1966 and served as its president and as editor-in-chief of that society's journal. He was elected in 1954 to represent Egypt in the International Association for University Professors and Lecturers. He was a member of the board of the International Society of Plant Pathology since its establishment. He was selected as a member of the board of the Mediterranean Union of Phytopathological

Societies then elected vice-president of that organization, and was awarded the Golden Medal of the Union in 1981. He was also a member of the editorial board of the research journal, *Phytopathologia Mediterranea*.

Dr. El-Helaly's first paper, which was on brown-spored parasitic discomycetes, was published in the *Transactions of the British Mycological Society* in 1935. He continued working on the control of fungal diseases of field crops in Egypt. His classical works on the control of chocolate spot of broad bean (*Vicia faba*) and kernel smut of sorghum, which were published in 1938 and 1939, respectively, are considered to be the first plant disease control contributions to Egyptian agriculture. The significance of his paper on the germination of *Rhizoctonia solani* on lettuce seeds at high temperatures, which was published in the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society*, London, in 1940, was recognized in England as well as in Egypt. His approximately 60 research articles included new records of plant diseases in Egypt. He was the senior author of two editions (1963 and 1966) of a comprehensive survey bulletin of plant diseases in Egypt, which are still considered to be the basis of many plant disease survey records in this country.

Dr. El-Helaly was the author of the first Arabic textbooks in botany, mycology, and plant pathology. He presided over several sessions in national and international congresses and conferences. Dr. El-Helaly is remembered by his students as a man instantly available to help others. To many of us, he was more than a teacher and colleague; he was our friend.